

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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DOUBLEDAY'S CHILDREN.

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BOOK I. THE NARRATIVE OF BASIL DOUBLEDAY.
CHAPTER V. OUR COUSINS.

DORIS had followed us into the room. We stood together, an open-eyed, wondering, and rather abashed trio. We had never before seen our uncle Isaac; we had never before even heard of our uncle Isaac.

He was certainly shabbier than we could have wished him to be, as a near relation, and dirtier, and uglier. His aspect indeed was curious, and to us, unattractive in no common degree. An uncle of ours might well, we thought, have possessed a larger share of physical graces, or at least a wardrobe of better condition. He wore a long over-coat of a faded mulberry colour, very high in the collar and abundant about the cuffs; short-waisted, with side pockets, protected by flaps—a greasy threadbare garment altogether, very frayed as to the edges and white as to the seams—a groom's striped waistcoat; patched trousers of drab cloth; and Blucher boots, tied with common string. He sustained upon his knees, as though he were nursing it, a battered, smeared, low-crowned hat, with a very broad brim; the receptacle of a tattered cotton handkerchief, of a dull crimson colour, spotted with white. He took snuff of a high-dried kind—looking like powdered ginger—frequently and with relish, to the hindrance of his distinctness of speech. He spoke in a thick, hoarse, guttural way, as one who had never been wholly free from catarrh or bronchial affection. His black eyes rolled

loosely; his nose was curved, drooping, thick, and coarse; his lips fleshy, his chin underhung; round his neck a parti-coloured comforter was twisted.

"Let us go away," I whispered to Doris.

"I don't like him at all, the nasty old thing," she whispered in reply.

"I call him a perfect beast," muttered Nick.

"Don't be frightened, my dears," said my father, pleasantly. "Your Uncle Isaac's very fond of children."

"Uncommon fond, to be sure," said Uncle Isaac, with an expansive smile, that revealed a yellow regiment of irregular teeth. "Come along to me, my little 'uns; I've got sugar-plums in my pocket, I shouldn't wonder." But we were not to be tempted; the bait failed to lure us—we even retreated some steps, still keeping very close order, towards the wall behind us. Not that we disapproved of sugar-plums; but Uncle Isaac's pockets did not strike us as an appropriate place of deposit for those dainties.

"He may keep his nasty sugar-plums," Doris whispered.

"I've got some kids of my own, at home," Uncle Isaac continued, still addressing us, nodding his head and smiling largely; "the very himage and pattern of you youngsters. And I makes them handy too, I can tell you. I brings them up strict, though I don't stint them in nothing, and we has our games together at times; no end of larks when we're all in the humour for it. Mike—that's the eldest, that is—he's as nice and sharp a lad, is Mike, as you could wish to see, with curly hair all over his head. He's in the orange and lemon trade, he is, and

when the fruit ain't in season he does a little in the brimstone-match business, and an uncommon quick hand he is at selling a hartiele. I'll say that for him. He's a credit to his teaching, and nothing short of it."

"Aye, aye," my father interposed, "highly interesting, I'm sure." But I think he would gladly have stayed Uncle Isaac's flow of speech, if he possibly could.

"Becky, she comes next," Uncle Isaac resumed; "she grows a great girl, with hair as black as coals, and eyes as bright as diamonds. She's handy, too, and helps her mother with the washing, and about the 'ouse in all manner of ways."

"Aye, aye," murmured my father in the manner of an interruptive yet acquiescent chorus. And he closed his eyes as though endeavouring to portray to himself little Becky at the wash-tub; but it may have been that he was trying to shut out the picture from his vision.

"She can't hardly reach to the tub yet without standing on a stool, and she's a way of getting the soap-suds into her eyes that's vexatious, to say the least of it; but that'll all come right in time I daresay. She's a sharp little thing. She favours her mother altogether, does Becky. For Mo, he's but a little 'un as yet, and much ain't to be expected of him perhaps. All the same, there's a deal of cleverness about him to my thinking. We must make a follorer of little Mo, I suppose."

"A what?" inquired my father, the speech of Uncle Isaac being now directed to him, and happily diverted from us.

"A follorer," Uncle Isaac repeated. "Why, bless your innocence, you don't mean to say as you don't know what that means? I thought better of you, I did indeed. A process-server. Now you understand. To be sure you do. You may depend upon it little Mo will let us know all about it, some of these fine-days."

Uncle Isaac's loquacity seemed not wholly agreeable to my father, but he bore with it politely enough. He was bent, indeed, upon applying it to useful account.

"We can derive a lesson from this, my dears. We should labour always to do our duty in the state to which we have been called, however humble it may be, and to serve our generation so far as we possibly can, as the children you have just heard of—"

"Your cousins, my dears," Uncle Isaac explained, chuckling, and nodding, and smiling terribly.

"Just so; as your cousins have been doing," my father resumed; but a wincing look had passed over his face. "Mike—in the orange and lemon trade, I think it was?" Uncle Isaac bowed low. "Becky at the wash-tub; and little Mo as what is called, it seems, a follower—if that is to be regarded as his regular occupation. It's pleasant to think of so much industry going on among the young—of children trying hard to do their duty towards their parents."

"Wouldn't you like to see and make friends with your cousins, my dears?" Uncle Isaac inquired of us.

"No!" we all shouted together, with the unanimity of theatrical supernumeraries.

My father laughed. Uncle Isaac chuckled and grinned, but his mirth was not of a very hearty sort.

We whispered together. Nick expressed a strong desire to punch Mike's head. Doris declared she should like to upset Becky into her wash-tub. I felt decidedly inimical towards little Mo.

"To think of such rubbish being held up to us as examples!" observed Nick.

"But I don't believe they are our cousins. I don't believe he is our uncle. I'm sure we never had an Uncle Isaac. Why, he's like an old-clothes man!" This was spoken in a very low tone, hissed out from behind clenched teeth. Doris was very angry.

"Your uncle has come to stay a few days with us," said my father, with a gracefully plausible air; "it behoves us to try and make his visit as agreeable to him as we can."

"I don't want to give no more trouble than I can help," observed Uncle Isaac.

"No trouble at all. Don't mention it."

"I always tries to make things pleasant for all parties."

"To be sure you do."

"But there's parties as rides rusty, and takes things to heart, and won't look at 'em in a reasonable light. It's hard to get on with sech, uncommon hard. 'Why, look here,' I says to 'em, 'I'm only a hagent. I've a duty to perform, and perform it I must. Parties must obey the law, and when the law says this or that, there ain't no help for it. We must do what the law tells us. Very well then. Let's make the best of it, that's what I says. A heasy-chair by the kitchen fire, with a morsel of bread and cheese and a pint of mild ale for supper—I don't ask for more than that. I can sleep most anywheres. Don't mind me, don't notice me, try and forget me. I'm as

quiet as a mouse, I am. You're no call to know I'm here. Only fair play, mind you. Don't try to best me. Not a stick goes out of the 'ouse without my knowing of it. I've laid 'ands on everything, and one of our young men will be round the fust thing in the morning to take the inwentory. Meantime I'm sure we shall get on very nicely together, if you only give your mind to it."

"Just so, nothing could be more reasonable."

"I see, sir, there won't be no trouble with you. You're a gentleman, you are, and most like know what it is to have to do with things of this kind. Lor', they're nothing when you're used to them. It's the ladies as gives trouble, if I may be excused for saying so. They can't understand, and they won't understand, and first they tries crying, and beseeching, and a-going down on their knees; and they wants this and that done, that's quite irreg'ler and totally out of the question; and then they takes to carnying and tries to overreach you, for they don't stick at trifles, ladies, when they've set their hearts upon a thing; and then they mounts the 'igh 'orse and tries to bully you, and ride you down and trample on you. I know 'em; I've had a deal to do with 'em; and a precious set they are. You take my word for it, sir, whenever there's a worry there's a woman at the bottom of it. Not but what I loves 'em too, for they're pretty creeturs when all's said and done; and I put it to you: What would life be without 'em?"

My father was glad, after these observations, to show Uncle Isaac downstairs forthwith, and provide him with a seat in front of the kitchen fire. Some refreshments were soon set before him, to which he did ample justice. He exhibited a fine appetite for cold beef and pickles, and emptied a large tankard of ale. We stole downstairs, at intervals, to watch him through the crack of the kitchen door, for our curiosity was much stirred in regard to him. He ate ravenously, thrusting his knife far into his mouth. His meal completed, he calmly picked his teeth with his fork; and that surgical operation over, he lighted a pipe, and filled the house with the fumes of very coarse and rank tobacco.

The servants resented his presence and treated him with considerable disrespect. They flung the plates and dishes at him rather than placed them before him, and avoided him as an odious object.

Norah, the cook, a dear friend of ours, and a faithful servant long attached to our household, said frankly that she pitied us and was sorry for my father, very sorry; but still she maintained that it was a real shame she couldn't have her kitchen to herself, and that the likes of him—referring to Uncle Isaac—should be warming himself before her fire. She spoke of him, indeed, in the most contemptuous way. No word was too bad for her to apply to him.

As to his being our Uncle Isaac, that she would not hear of for a moment. He wasn't our uncle. How could he be? It was only master's droll way of speaking. Master was fond of his joke; though for this man's sitting in her kitchen, it was not—in her judgment—quite so excellent a joke as it might have been.

We did not, of course, very well comprehend the object of Uncle Isaac's visit; the nature of "a man in possession" had yet to be explained to us. That we had from the first found his presence objectionable, seemed well justified afterwards, when he proceeded to seize, and bear away with him, sundry articles of furniture, the property of my father. It must be understood, however, that I am describing these early events by the light of subsequent experience. They were scarcely intelligible to me at the time; but their real significance is not now to be veiled. My father's long residence in "Queer-street" had been attended by the usual legal consequences; the difficulties he had so long contended with grew and multiplied, until they almost overwhelmed him.

If I remember rightly, however, Uncle Isaac, in the present instance, was not allowed to proceed to absolute extremities. A table, or some few chairs, may have been carried off; but there must have been friendly and pecuniary intervention on the part of someone, and rescue of my father's property, generally. There was at any rate a pause in his misfortunes for a season, if there was no decided improvement in the state of his affairs.

Certainly his troubles weighed lightly on him. He was sustained by some mysterious faith in his own good luck. He was never really depressed; it always seemed so clear to him that—without his stir—help would surely come to him from some quarter or another. His natural good spirits did not desert him, although he was apt to affect a special gravity of countenance in the presence of adversity, a didactic tone in speaking of the lessons

to be deduced from his difficulties. A sense of coming trouble, indeed, usually induced him to be specially careful of the decorums and proprieties of life. By-and-by we learnt to look for and to read these signs and tokens.

When my father was unusually strict about such matters as attendance at family prayers, or the church-going of the servants, we prepared ourselves for the advent of a man in possession. When he was peculiarly white and starched about the cravat, we made sure that he expected hourly to be arrested for debt.

CHAPTER VI. AN INTERVAL.

THE house in The Polygon was presently given up, and we quitted for some-while the precinct of Somers-town. We returned to it eventually—not to re-occupy the house in The Polygon, however, but a less pretentious abode in the neighbouring Ossulton-street: that, I think, was the name. Meantime we lived in Lisson-grove; in Stamford-street, Blackfriars; in Duncan-terrace, Islington; in West-square, Lambeth; and elsewhere. One summer found us the tenants of a cottage in the Vale of Health, Hampstead; and we paid autumn visits to Gravesend, Herne Bay, Ramsgate, and other holiday places.

There had been a change for the better in my father's pecuniary affairs; indeed they could scarcely have changed for the worse. It was about this time, probably, that he received payment of a considerable legacy bequeathed to him by a distant relative, of whom, I think, he knew very little, and we children certainly knew nothing at all. I remember, however, my father's speaking often of a kinsman of his, who preferred to leave his fortune to people with whom he had but the slightest acquaintance, rather than to others whom he knew very well indeed, but did not like any the better on that account. In this way my father acquired an unlooked-for sum of money. We were all clothed in expensive suits of mourning, and so advertised at once our supposed sorrow, and our assured increase of fortune. I have a distinct recollection of my sister Doris looking very handsome; indeed, in her sable attire; her neat little figure was clad in well-fitting silks and velvets, with black silk stockings casing her shapely little legs; while her ruddy golden hair, in two long plaited tails tied with satin ribbons, ran down her back and nearly touched the ground. My friend, Mr.

Leveridge, whom I went to visit occasionally at his abode overlooking the Thames, and who, at long intervals, came to see us, was wont to declare that Doris was really growing like her mother at last; less beautiful, without doubt, but beautiful all the same. For, as he went on to say, "colour and youth count for a good deal in a woman's face."

Nick averred that Doris was "well enough to look at," and curtly dismissed the subject. Brothers are but indifferent and unsympathetic critics of a sister's beauty. They would rather she should be comely than not, as a matter of preference; but the question does not disturb them much; they are content in either case, and proceed on their way with unaffected appetites and digestive powers.

My father's season of good fortune was not of very long endurance, and probably he did not make the most of the opportunities permitted him. For his grasp was of an infirm kind when money was concerned; it oozed through his fingers very rapidly. His purse always seemed to him as inexhaustible as the purse of Fortunatus; it was with exceeding surprise he found that occasionally he thrust his fingers into it in vain; it was empty! He experienced a grave sense of injustice done to him at such junctures.

Still he did make some good use of his money. Nick was sent to a school in the neighbourhood of Chipping Ongar, Essex. I became an inmate of a "preparatory seminary for young gentlemen" at Twickenham. Whereas Nick's school was ruled by a man calling himself a doctor in right of some foreign diploma, and wearing a gown and trencher cap, my seminary was presided over by a lady arrayed in a towering headdress of the turban order, that trembled under its weight of bows of ribbon and bunches of artificial flowers. My mistress, indeed, could scarcely have been less formidable than Nick's master. She owned a loud, deep, bass voice, a fiery complexion, fierce black eyes, an aggressively aquiline nose, and a very bristling chin and upper lip.

Doris paid a long visit to certain aunts of my father's, who had been discovered resident at Bath—elderly single ladies, of peculiar dispositions. Why they had so long forborne to notice their great-niece, I can explain but vaguely; but they resembled in many respects those fairy godmothers of nursery lore, who, in revenge for some imaginary slight suffered

at a christening festival, remove themselves for a long while from mortal ken, generally to reappear inauspiciously and unexpectedly, much bent upon malevolent designs. Possibly they revealed themselves upon learning of the temporary improvement in my father's affairs, deeming him, on that account, more worthy of the honour of their acquaintance and patronage, than he had previously been. In any case they conceived a violent fancy for Doris. One of them, indeed—a very elderly spinster, with pencilled eyebrows, painted cheeks, and a wig of stiffly clustered ringlets, looking at a distance rather like bunches of grapes—maintained that, at some very remote period in her past life, she had been “just such another” as Doris. Whereupon Doris was disrespectfully incredulous, grimacing, wrinkling her nose, and drawing down her mouth. However, she accompanied the old ladies to Bath, and remained with them some years. They occupied a large house in The Circus, and lived after a gay and fashionable manner, being much addicted to dinner-parties, card-playing, balls, suppers, hot rooms, late hours, and other of the trying incidents of social festivity. They dressed extravagantly and youthfully, rather than becomingly, making more ample display of their antique necks than was altogether desirable. Their yellow complexions, however, showed off their pearls to advantage, and they were fond of pearls, and possessed a great number of those jewels. They admired Doris, and took pains to dress her in the modes then prevailing, sparing no outlay to effect that object. They curled, and plaited, and smoothed, and frizzled her auburn hair; frilled her frocks with lace and other finery; adorned her fingers with rings; her hands with white kid gloves; and her feet with shining sandals of satin or Spanish leather. If I may say so, she was as an animated doll for these old girls to amuse themselves with. Doris had already been possessed of certain inclinations towards vanity, which were much increased and promoted by the proceedings of these elderly ladies. However, her education otherwise was not absolutely neglected. Indeed, they were at pains to engage various masters, to teach her drawing and singing, French and Italian, the piano, and the harp. In drawing she soon exhibited very considerable skill; her other accomplishments proved to be unenduring. They gradually fell from her,

owing to disuse, after she had emerged from a state of pupilage.

I remember that Nick derided Doris as a “French doll,” when she reappeared among us for a season. He mocked her method of speaking as too superfine. She called Bath, Ba-ath, and had caught other tricks of fashionable pronunciation, from the elders with whom she had been living. She was much angered at his ridicule; but could only retort that he had a dirty face, and that she hated him. He was very severe upon her elegance of dress and her airs of superiority, and said that she had been taught, he supposed, to despise her “poor relations.” After he had made her cry, we all became very good friends again. I had rather sided with Nick in the first instance, not merely because he was a strong and rather despotic boy, but because I thought he had really right on his side, and that Doris had become a trifle arrogant, owing to her long sojourn in Bath. However, when I perceived the tears glistening in her eyes, I was won over to Doris forthwith.

My father had been absent from England. He had visited Spain—not to take part in its internal struggle, of which a good deal was heard in those days, and has been heard since for that matter—but professionally, as he avowed, as a student of the remains of Moorish architecture to be contemplated in that country. I think he must have had its châteaux also in view.

But the fall of my father's fortunes, and their return to an adverse state, happened at last. By sad and sure degrees our temporary prosperity came to an end.

I found myself removed from my school, with some quarters' charges due for my education. Presently my father supplied us with intermittent instruction. I went to Nick's school for three months while he stayed at home. Then I relieved guard, as it were, by taking Nick's place at home for a term, while he went to school. In this way my father flattered himself that he was educating two boys at the price of one.

But in time this plan was abandoned. My father, I believe, had neglected to maintain amicable or pecuniary relations with our Essex schoolmaster. We were both at home, idle, tall, thin, growing lads, developing without regard to the dimensions of our clothes; it almost seemed, indeed, that they had shrunken rather than that we had expanded.

Nick was altogether bigger, sturdier,

and stronger than I. He looked older, perhaps, than he really was. I know he retained a liking for school-boy games long after he had ceased to look like a school-boy, and even when the down upon his cheeks was darkening and thickening into incipient whiskers.

We were back again in Somers-town, playing in the back yard, as we had been wont to play years before; but now we were in Ossulton-street, in a very inferior house to our old home in The Polygon. Our playground was still more confined, and was, it must be confessed, dingy and dirty even to squalor.

Nick was noisily spinning a peg-top, winding the whipcord very tightly, and launching the toy with much exercise of force and art.

Something whistled past me. I had a glimpse of a ball of yellow feathers.

A canary-bird had taken refuge between my waistcoat and my shirt-front, and lay trembling there, so warm and soft and pulsing, I feared to touch it.

"My bird! My dickie! My darling! Oh, please don't hurt him!" cried a young, sweet, silvery voice.

A little girl was looking over the brick wall that parted our premises from our neighbour's.

I recognised her at once; she was the little girl next door—and a very pretty little girl.

ENIGMAS.

AMONG the many pleasant things which young people bring forward for mutual amusement at Christmas, are enigmas—puzzles, like rebuses, charades, and conundrums, but having a distinctive character of their own. An enigma has been described as "the description of a thing by certain of its qualities, selected and disposed with the object of hiding what the thing is, and of occasioning its discovery to come as a surprise. It is an instance of the application of language to conceal our thoughts; and its object is to exercise the ingenuity. It has not simply to be received by the mind, but to be solved."

Some of the brightest wits have exercised a leisure hour in constructing enigmas full of ingenuity, fertile in idea, and graceful in language. It may be worth while to notice the principal forms which this kind of puzzle assumes, ac-

cording to the materials which the composer chooses to employ.

One manœuvre consists in taking the letters of a word, adding to or subtracting from them, and seeing in what way the meaning becomes changed thereby. Of this kind is the enigma, "My first two letters are a man, my first three a woman, my first four a brave man, my whole a brave woman." This is a really excellent analysis of the literal constituents of Heroine. The following example is attributed to Charles James Fox, and is without much difficulty seen to relate to glass:—

What is pretty and useful in various ways,
Tho' it tempts some poor mortals to shorten their days,

Take one letter from it, and there will appear
What youngsters admire ev'ry day in the year;
Take two letters from it, and then without doubt
You are what that is, if you don't find it out.

Canning's enigma is very neat, on the effect of adding the letter "s" to the word "cares"—converting a plural into a singular, troubles into a pleasure. One of the best enigmas of this class was by Lord Macaulay, on the word—but we will leave the discovery of the word to the ingenuity of the reader:

Cut off my head, and singular I am;
Cut off my tail, and plural I appear;
Cut off my head and tail, and, wondrous feat,
Although my middle's left, there's nothing there.
What is my head, cut off? a sounding sea;
What is my tail, cut off? a rushing river;
And in their mighty depth I fearless play,
Parent of sweetest sounds, yet mute for ever.

The initials A E I O U formed an enigma that lasted during many years of the reign of Frederick the Third, Elector of Austria and Emperor of Germany in the fifteenth century. They were inscribed on public buildings, on regimental flags, on the backs of books, and on the imperial plate. A solution was found among the emperor's papers, after his death, in German and Latin; and sufficiently boastful it certainly was:

Alles Erdreich ist Eesterreich unterthan.
Austrie est imperare Orbi universo.

Another form of O U enigma is that clever production which was for a long time attributed to the late Professor Whewell, but which is now said to have been due to the Rev. R. Egerton Warburton, although the reply may have been Whewell's. It is based on the near identity of sound between "cipher" and "sigh for;" on the fact that cipher stands for zero, nought, 0, or nothing; that cipher is also a motto or monogram; and that the exclamation O (Oh!) is shaped nearly

like the cipher 0. A lady is supposed to ask for your cipher and motto, and you reply as follows:

U O a O, but I O thee;
O O no O, but O O me;
Or else let my O thy O go,
And give back O O I O thee.

The lady responds thus:

I d O your O, but O U not;
A O am I, and can't O your lot;
I send you a O and O your pain;
But a O your O U O in vain.

The word sigh reminds us of the following elegant trifle:

It came, though I fetched it; when come it was gone;
It stayed but a moment, it could not stay long;
I ask not who saw it, it could not be seen,
And yet might be felt by a king or a queen.

As kiss is next door to sigh, we append here a pretty triplet by Sir Thomas Wyatt, dated as far back as the time of Henry the Eighth:

A lady gave me a gift she had not,
And I received her gift which I took not,
And if she take it again I grieve not.

Effects of a ludicrous kind—all the more ludicrous through being wholly unexpected—are produced by presenting in majestic or elegant form what was originally a nursery rhyme, or, perhaps, a humorous ditty. One scarcely recognises a comic song, much in favour some years ago, when dressed up in the stanzas beginning: "If I had a quadruped averse to speed," &c. The elegant furbishing which Jack and Gill has received may be cited as another example:

'Twas not on Alpine snow or ice,
But honest English ground,
"Excelsior" was their device;
But sad the fate they found.
They did not climb for love or fame,
But follow'd duty's call;
They were together in their aim,
But parted in their fall.

Several enigmas have been based on the fact that, in familiar talk, mother is often used for stepmother and mother-in-law, brother for half-brother and brother-in-law, &c.; and from the further fact, that cross-marriages between two or three families—widowers marrying spinsters, and bachelors marrying widows—give great complexity to the oddity of designations for relationships. One form of this enigma is as follows:

A wedding there was, and a dance there must be;
But who should stand first? thus all did agree:
Old grandsire and granddam should lead the dance
down;
Two fathers, two mothers should step the same
ground;
Two daughters stood up and danced with their sires,
And also two sons who danced with their mothers;
Three sisters there were who danced with their
brothers:

Two uncles vouchsafed with their nieces to dance;
With nephews to jig it it pleased two aunts;
Three husbands would dance with none but their
wives;

The granddaughter chose the jolly grandson;
The bride she would dance with bridegroom or none.

And yet there were only six persons in all, three male and three female, among whom there were no unlawful marriages or births—a neat nut to crack. Another relates to two families, each comprising a widow, her son (a widower), and his daughter; each man then married the other man's widowed mother, and thus a bewildering relationship arose. Giving christian-names to the several persons, the matter has been stated thus: Elizabeth and her first husband had a son John; she then married Thomas, and had a daughter Susan. Ann and her first husband had a son Thomas; she then married John, and had a daughter Sarah.

Two or more meanings to the same word supply an inexhaustible store of materials for enigma-composers; and the resources are increased if we are permitted to use words having the same sound but different modes of spelling. Social circles of merry-makers are well acquainted with this form of puzzle, which, in its superior varieties, has engaged the attention of not a few witty and intellectual persons. A simple word with two meanings suggested the following to Mrs. Barbauld:

There's not a bird that cleaves the sky
With crest or plume more gay than I;
Yet seldom I'm observed to fly
Unless my wings are broken.

The diversity of meanings to such words as bar, bit, and box, gives origin to an almost endless string of enigmas. An old enigma, dating from some period of the last century, describes a lady's person by means of words having double or triple meanings: "Her complexion is Sarah Short; her hue, a city of China; her nose, like my hand when writing; about her mouth a famous singer smiles; another famous singer gives you a description of her stature; her chin a tête-à-tête gives: her teeth, part of a day, neither morning, noon, nor night." Then comes a description of her dress, among which some of the items are: "On her head she wears a riotous rabble, fastened with a game at bowls; her gown is part of a musical instrument; her shoes, an eastern empire scalded; her stomacher, an ancient inhabitant of Jerusalem and two yards and a half." And so on with her amusements, her religion, and the books in her library.

The late Bishop Wilberforce, who relieved more grave studies by occasional pleasantries of wit and humour, constructed an enigma on "man," by the employment of a whole string of words having two or more meanings each: "All pronounce me a wonderful piece of mechanism, and yet few people have numbered the strange medley of which I am comprised. I have a large box and two lids, two caps, two musical instruments, a number of weathercocks, two established measures, some weapons of warfare, and a great many little articles that a carpenter cannot do without. Then I have about me a couple of esteemed fishes, and a great many of smaller size, two lofty trees, and the fruit of an indigenous plant; a handsome stag, and a great number of small kinds of game; two halls or places of worship, two students or scholars, the stairs of an hotel, and half a score of Spanish gentlemen to attend on me; I have what is the terror of the slave, also two domestic animals, and a number of negatives." We should have said—but most readers will soon see this for themselves—that there are here not only similar words with dissimilar meanings, but also words having the same sounds though differently spelt.

The prepositions—under, over, before, after, between, &c., are favourite materials in the hands of enigma-composers; the words themselves being omitted, but their effect denoted by the relative positions of the component elements of a sentence. The adjectives—small, great, &c., are similarly used; and the letter X is available to express the word cross, as well as the numeral 10. A combination of these aids, or some of them, leads to the following whimsical skit on married life:

xx EE marriage XX ee.

And to this, which has become pretty familiarly known, both as an enigma and as a judicious rule to observe in society:

I am
man making mischief wife.

If, besides the equivalence of X to 10, we bear in mind the relation of other Roman numerals to Arabic numerals, we obtain a clue to quite a budget of enigmas, one example of which will suffice:

The reverse of fourteen,
The extremes of eleven,
United you'll certainly have
The name of a woman
Six husbands in seven
Would gladly see laid in the grave.

The word woman here reminds us of a neat enigma which also assumes the charade-form:

Misery, myself, and my wife.

The effect of a negative—no, not, or nothing—gives a very puzzling character to some enigmas for those who are not in the secret, such as—

For me the saint will break his word,
For me the coward draws his sword;
Heard by the deaf, seen by the blind,
Scorned by the meek and humble mind, &c. &c.

What can be done with a word of widely-extended application, in all the affairs of life, is illustrated by the following, translated from Voltaire: "What of all things in the world is the longest and the shortest, the swiftest and the slowest, the most divisible and the most extended, the most neglected and the most regretted; without which nothing can be done, which devours all that is little, and ennobles all that is great?" A word of one single meaning, if cleverly managed, may seem to have many, e.g.:

I went to a wood, and caught it;
Then I sat me down and sought it;
The longer I sought
For what I had caught,
The less worth catching I thought it;
I would rather have sold than bought it.
And when I had sought
Without finding aught,
Home in my hand I brought it.

Sometimes an enigma is so easy of solution, that its merit is to be found in its quaintness, elegance, or some other characteristic. An old medical receipt-book, in handwriting which seems to denote the time of Henry the Eighth, contains the following:

The beuety of the nyght ys shooe,
And mother of all hwmors that be,
And lykwyse lady of the seys
That tyme doth mesure as she fleys;
The sonn shooe follows everywhere
And shooe ys changen of the ayer.
Thys ladys name fayne wold I know,
That dwells so high and rules so low.

Some enigmas, on the other hand, are beset with difficulties which can only be overcome by persons conversant with a particular science or department of study. Any one ignorant, for instance, of the singular structure of a rosebud, with its calyx of narrow leaves, would try in vain to solve the following:

Five brothers there are,
Born at once of their mother;
Two bearded, two bare,
The fifth neither one nor the other,
But to each of his brothers half-brother.

Or, in another form (for the original is in Latin) :

Of us five brothers at the same time born,
Two from our birthday our beards have worn,
On other two none ever have appeared,
While the fifth brother wears but half a beard.

Many enigmas have been put forth with an announcement, that the author would give a prize of a sum of money to any person who would find out the correct solution. It may be doubted whether such liberality is anything more than a bit of wagery. There is one which was attributed sometimes to Lord Chesterfield, sometimes to Miss Seward, and for a correct solution of which a thousand pounds was offered. We should be sorry to guarantee either the attribution or the offer. One form of it is in twenty-two lines; another, in fourteen. The latter runs thus :

The noblest object in the works of art ;
The brightest scene that nature doth impart ;
The well-known signal in the time of peace ;
The point essential in a tenant's lease ;
The ploughman's comfort when he holds the plough ;
The soldier's duty and the lover's vow ;
A planet seen between the earth and sun ;
A prize which merit never yet has won ;
A wife's ambition, and a parson's dues ;
A miser's idol, and the badge of Jews :
If now your happy genius can divine
The correspondent word to every line,
By the first letters will be plainly found
An ancient city that is much renowned.

Three or four attempted solutions of this are extant, but all poor and insufficient. Another enigma, much talked of at Oxford a few years ago, and said to have been written by a University man in high position, who offered fifty pounds to any one who could guess it, assumed the following form :

When from the Ark's capacious round
The world came forth in pairs,
Who was it that first heard the sound
Of boots upon the stairs ?

It is certain that many attempts have been made to solve this, prize or no prize ; we have seen three, discordant as to result, but ingenious individually.

We do not know that any reward was offered for an old Latin enigma, the English translation of which is thus worded :

A corpse without a sepulchre ;
A sepulchre without a corpse ;
And yet a sepulchre with corpse contained :

Nor for one which appeared in a periodical about thirty years ago :

'Tis seen each day, and heard of every hour,
Yet no one sees or ever hears its power ;
It is familiar with the prince and sage,
As well as with the peasant. In each age,

Since time began, it has been known full well ;
And yet no earth, nor heaven, nor even hell
Has e'er contained it, or e'er known its worth.
It does exist, and yet it ne'er had birth ;
It nowhere is, and yet it finds a home
In almost every page of every tome ;
The greatest bliss to human nature here
Is having it to doubt, and dread, and fear.
It gives us pain when measuring the esteem
Of those we fondly worship in love's dream.
It gives us pleasure instantly to hear
From those we love ; sweet friendship it can sear.
Thought cannot compass it, yet ne'ertheless
The lip can easily its sense express.
'Tis not in sleep, for sleep hath worlds of dreams ;
Yet plain and easy to each mind it seems ;
For men of all degrees and every clime
Can speak of it. Eternity nor time
Hath it beheld. It singularly sounds
To foreign ears. Title, wealth, and fame,
However great, must end in it the same.
It is, is not. It can be heard, although
Nor man, nor angel e'er its sound can know.

Whether a solution of the above can be found in one of the letters of the alphabet, readers are entitled to judge for themselves ; but it may be said, in passing, that the constituents of the alphabet supply an inexhaustible fund of material for enigma composers.

Two famous examples of the kind just adverted-to, each depending on the power of a single letter in the construction of syllables and words, were attributed, in a vague way, to Lord Byron, as especially notable for their skill and elegance. They were afterwards shown to have been the composition of Miss Catherine Fanshawe, who wrote them in an album just sixty years ago, when visiting at Deepdene, the seat of Mr. Thomas Hope, near Dorking. One of them, graceful in form and easily solved, runs thus :

'Twas whispered in heaven, 'twas muttered in hell,
And echo caught softly the sound as it fell ;
On the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,
And the depths of the ocean its presence confessed.
'Twill be found in the sphere when it's riven asunder,
Be seen in the lightning and heard in the thunder.
'Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,
It assuats at his birth and ends at his death,
Presides o'er his happiness, honour, and health,
Is the prop of his house and the end of his wealth.
In the heaps of the miser 'tis hoarded with care,
But is sure to be lost by his prodigal heir ;
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound ;
It prays with the hermit, with monarch is crowned.
Without it the soldier and sailor may roam,
But woe to the wretch that expels it from home :
In the whisper of conscience 'tis sure to be found,
Nor e'en in the whirlwind of passion is drowned.
'Twill soften the heart ; and though deaf be the ear,
'Twill make it acutely and instantly hear.
In the shade let it rest like a beautiful flower,
Oh breathe on it gently, it dies in an hour !

The companion enigma is not less elegant in diction nor singular in antitheses. As it is rather long to be transcribed in full

here, we will give three of the stanzas only, sufficient to afford a clue to the solution :

I am not in youth, nor in manhood, nor age,

But in infancy ever am known ;

I am stranger alike to the fool and the sage,

And though I'm distinguished in history's page,
I always am greatest alone.

I'm not in the earth, nor the sun, nor the moon ;

You may search all the sky, I'm not there ;

In the morning and ev'ning, though not in the noon,

You may plainly perceive me, for, like a balloon,
I am always suspended in air.

Though disease may possess me, and sickness, and pain,

I am never in sorrow nor gloom ;

Though in wit and in wisdom I equally reign,

I'm the heart of all sin, and have long lived in vain,
And ne'er shall be found in the tomb.

The enigma, we may remark, in conclusion, affords more variety of resources to a skilful constructor than the five kinds of puzzles known as acrostics, anagrams, rebuses, conundrums, and charades. Or, rather, it is open to the enigmatiser to avail himself of aid from all of these in turn ; for the lines of demarcation between them are not very strictly drawn. The reader will find, in the past volumes of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, illustrations of other forms of verbal pleasantry, under the names of Echo Verses, Alliterative Verses, Palindromes, Macaronic verses,* &c.

WHAT IS CIVILISATION ?

A SHARP fourth-form boy, when the school had been called upon to define Civilisation, wrote in his theme the one word "Work." The youthful essayist was nearer than he was aware of to the truth. Civilisation is, in fact, a sort of savings bank wherein is stored up the result of long struggles and hard-won victories—sometimes over the forces of nature, sometimes over the crass ignorance, the dogged prejudice, or the stubborn superstitions, of mankind.

Nothing but the accumulated fruits of work done long ago could make our present civilisation—itself but a stage on the high-road of progress—possible. All honour to the earlier pioneers who bore the burthen and heat of the day, and who, with deficient means, scanty knowledge, and no history but that of oral tradition, laid the foundations of the ever-growing

fabric, of which the uppermost story has yet to rise resplendent. We profit, more or less, by the toil, the efforts, the successess, of those who, compared with ourselves, were groping in the dark.

To many of us it must seem as though we could not get on without glass—without that hard, clean, transparent substance from which we drink, through which we gaze from windows ; which holds our wine, our pickles, and our physic ; and by the help of which we scan the starry heavens, or behold a flea or a money-spinner as the hairy monster that it is. A glassless society, quaffing its liquor from horn and pipkin, filtering a dim light through casements of oiled paper, and destitute of bottles or phials, seems strange to us. And yet that old Greek story of the Tyrian merchants who, lighting their fire by the seashore, and chancing to heat a lump of the natron they carried, in contact with the sand, accidentally stumbled on the discovery of glass, was long credited.

Without a certain mastery over the inert matter around us, and a very decisive assertion of superiority to the wild beasts, which are not at first inclined to yield precedence to man, there is not much room for mental or moral improvement. The little we know of the people of the Stone Age, does not represent the cave-dwellers in a very engaging point of view. Their tastes must have been coarse, and their habits slovenly and unclean. Bold and hardy hunters they must have been, as the bones of the beasts they slew—and the list of which includes the bear, the cave-lion, the wolf, and even the mammoth it would seem, as well as stag, and elk, and chamois, the bison, the wild sheep, and the wild horse—remain to testify. But they deserve yet more praise for the ingenuity that could make axes, needles, adzes, arrow-point, spear-head, and graving-tool, out of sharp-edged flints, and with such poor instruments could work in wood, marble, bone, and ivory, than for their prowess in the chase.

The earliest metal-workers, towards the close of what we now call the Stone Age, naturally made use of such minerals as came readily to hand. Curiously enough, an alloy or mixture of two metals, tin and copper—ductile, easily fusible, and easy to manipulate—was very widely known, for centuries before a homogeneous metal came into use. But then iron, which alone has the necessary strength and hardness, when employed singly, is by no means

* *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, New Series, Vol. 7, pp. 247, 514, Feb. 10, and April 27, 1872 ; Vol. 15, p. 329, Jan. 1, 1876.

easy to manufacture; whereas bronze can with facility be made to take any shape, and is more tenacious, if more quickly abraded, than iron itself.

The silent history recorded in the remains of the Swiss lake-dwellings tells us, eloquently enough, how a small-limbed, deft-fingered race from the East, provided with seedcorn and pulse, cultivating fruit as well as grain, and bringing with them their cattle and ponies, their goats and sheep, and domestic dogs and poultry, supplanted the men of Stone.

The second dynasty of lake-dwellers were evidently far ahead of their precursors both in the arts of peace and war. Their brooches and bracelets, of gold and silver, contrasted with the bone armlets and ivory rings of the Stone epoch. Theirs was a life of refinement, compared with that of the rude first settlers; and it is not without a pang of sentimental regret that the archaeologist sees them give place to a more robust horde of invaders, before whose steel swords and iron spear-points their bronze weapons proved as sorry a defence, as had the flint tomahawks of the savages of the Glacial period. The Age of Iron had set in, and the most serviceable of all the metals in Tubal Cain's smithy asserted its superiority over the rest.

It is a great gulf which lies between the indisputably true annals that lay unwritten, beneath the peat and clay of a Swiss lake-side, or in limestone caverns of Central and Western Europe, and the heterogeneous mass of legends which we call early history. However, before the historical era had fairly commenced, very many discoveries had been made; animals of various sorts obeyed their human masters; materials the most dissimilar were pressed into the service of man. There could, however, be no very rapid or general progress, so long as the selfish isolation of the tribal system tended to set every man's hand against the foreigner, who was not akin to him by blood or adoption. One secret of the early civilisation of the great empires of the pre-Roman day was that, under Semiramis or Pharaoh, the clan signified less, and the nation more, than among the jealous knots of barbarians beyond the frontier.

Civilisation, in its fullest meaning, moral as well as material, implies a tolerance and a sympathy with those who are without the pale, for examples of which we vainly search the pages of the classic historians. It is creditable to

Athens that, in stemming the tide of Persian conquest, she knew that she was saving the liberties of Greece at large, which other Greeks were slow to see. But she had no thought of anything outside the boundaries of Hellas or the Hellenic colonies, and would have heard with amused indifference that Xerxes had subjugated the Gauls, or that the Great King had carried his victorious banners to that remote isle of Britain whence Phœnician keels brought tin.

Commerce has, indirectly, approved itself the mightiest civilising agent. It is only when a country like Japan or Paraguay cuts itself off from all intercourse with the outer world, that complete intellectual stagnation can ensue. And no caravan can plod across a desert, no ship enter a harbour, without bringing with it somewhat of novelty to leaven, for good or ill, the thoughts of the home-staying population.

There have been legislators who have striven to set up a certain rigid standard of civilisation, and to ticket mankind, from the cradle to the grave, according to a fixed formula. Lycurgus organised Sparta into a barrack. The Incas left the hard-working people of Peru neither care nor individual aspirations. The Hindu conquerors of India fossilised society into castes, telling off in platoons, so to speak, born priests, hereditary slipper-makers, predestined tailors, and washermen by right of succession. Human nature, however, has a provoking habit of snapping the trammels with which pedants seek to bind her. Athenian, Theban, Macedonian, in turn out-fought the over-drilled Spartan. Peru fell, like a card castle, at a touch from the Spanish conqueror. In India, Sudra kings have had their curries seasoned by Brahman cooks.

In one respect the middle ages do appear to outshine that classic civilisation, which had moved the admiration of Goth, Frank, and Lombard. The cut-throat chivalry of feudal Europe were liberal to lazaret and hospital and almshouse, and all the various institutions that sprang up throughout Christendom, to assuage hunger, and relieve disease and destitution. Such foundations would have seemed strange and superfluous, both to the builders of the Old Rome and the New. But then Greek and Roman had no idea of a social system, which should include myriads and millions of free poor. They had the less need of hospitals, in that the master was bound by

law and custom to care for sick and aged slaves, and that two-thirds of the work were done by slavish hands.

Very gradual was the progress from streets that were foul and stifling, dark on moonless nights, and infested by thieves and brawlers, to clean and gaslit streets, whose smooth side-pavement rings to the tramp of the policeman on his beat. Gradual, too, was the improvement which changed a private house from a cavernous kitchen, filled in winter with pungent wood-smoke that bleared the eyes and choked the lungs, and from which there was no escape save to the sleeping dens or cubicula, into the orderly series of apartments which we now inhabit.

It is the work which has been done, that renders possible the work of to-morrow as of to-day. The great factory, wherein the air vibrates with the hum of revolving spindles—the vast forge, where the giant steam-hammer deals with such masses of glowing iron, as might have lain on a Titan's anvil—descend in line direct from the wattled hovels, under the rotten thatch of which early artificers plied their petty toil. The very blaze of gas that irradiates our shops and theatres; the electric beacon that flashes its friendly warning over land and sea; owe their being to the smoky lamp over which some humble student bent in that dim past, when to know more than one's neighbours was to be certainly pelted, and possibly burned, as a sorcerer.

Just as a nation's wealth consists of its collective savings, so do the deeds done since first improvement began constitute a real balance in the world's bank, on which in time of need we may draw. Civilisation has blunted the teeth of famine and stamped out the venom of plague. Since the invention of lightning-conductors, our great buildings are no longer likely to be burned down, as were the abbeys and minsters of which Fuller gives a lengthy list, "by fire from heaven." We know of the approach of the dread cyclone, and see, as it were, the shadow of the coming tempest darken the wall.

Had not the alchemists of the middle ages—who, in seeking for gold and for immortal youth, stumbled across so many scientific keystones by which westill profit—been buoyed up by eager ambition, the clock of progress would have been put back for a good many years. Thales and Aristotle were practical men according to their means, whereas nothing is more curious

than the manner in which mediæval students of science, who were not of the mystic following of Hermes Trismegistus, shirked experiment. They were always writing on their parchments and palimpsests what could be done, and citing Greek and Arabian authority with all the reasons logically expounded. But, as a rule, they shrank from doing it. Glass vessels, suitable apparatus of all sorts, chemicals and drugs, were scarce, dear, and hard of transport; while the ducking-stool and the pillory, with a possibility of the discipline of fire and faggot, might punish an explosion or an over-brilliant demonstration.

The great material discoveries—such as steam-power, gas, and vaccination, the iron road, the wire that puts a girdle round the earth—represent not mere fortunate guesses, but in every case a succession of hard-fought battles, waged against dull obstinacy, stubborn prejudice, and alarmed selfishness. The Dragon of dogged resistance to innovation of every sort is a monster tenacious of life; and the scientific St. George has often need of all his forces, before he can trample his thick-skinned antagonist under foot.

More than once, civilisation has had to fight for her very existence against an enemy who would have extirpated all learning, art, and refinement, as ruthlessly as a wild boar would root up the flowers and fruit trees of a garden. Had Attila triumphed at Chalons, had the lieutenants of Hulaku conquered in Silesia, Europe would have had to stoop her neck for a time under the insulting heel of a Tartar master. A similar bondage, still more than the rigours of the climate, has kept Russia two centuries behind the rest of Christendom.

It may safely be said that the worst of the rugged road has been traversed, and that the future of civilisation is one of at least good augury. Knowledge is now no longer, as in Egypt or Greece, the property of a small class; and with its diffusion it becomes more difficult to extinguish than was once the case. This is perhaps rather a time of improvement than of novel and striking discovery, but in truth it is the multiplicity of inventions, each of which would once have been a world's wonder, that mitigates the surprise with which they are received, and none can dare to set material bounds to the promise of what lies as yet hidden from our eyes amid the mists of the future.

MR. MARSTON'S FOLLY.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

THEY hold a market still once a week in Hazelton—the village-town to which The Brooks plays the important part of great house. On every Thursday high gigs and square carts pour into the place from morn till night, driven by farmers and their wives, who make market-day at Hazelton the grand social event of their week. Carts filled with garden and farm produce of every description rumble into the High-street from earliest dawn, and by the time the town is sufficiently awake to be out and about, the contents of these carts are arranged in picturesque order in stalls in the market-house, and along the street adjoining. Here, in well-ordered rows, the fruits of the earth give one what artists call “colour-sensations” as the eye roves from the rich red of the glossy tomato, to the delicate tints of green displayed by the various sorts of cabbage and lettuce. Here big yellow pears contrast themselves cleverly with bloomy-purple plums and glowing carrots, and onions become things of beauty when the sun's rays fall upon their veined and polished skins. There is plenty of “colour” too in the meat-market, where the slaughtered bullock and lamb lie down together in fat and juicy profusion; and where pheasants and hares, yellow cochin-china pullets and daintily-speckled guinea-fowls, are festooned across one end of the building in a way that makes it resemble a feather trophy.

Here, at about eleven in the morning, the matrons of Hazelton meet in the course of their rambles from stall to stall, and exchange their opinions as to the wicked price of everything, and the goings on of such of their neighbours, as happen not to be present at the discussion. On this special Thursday Mr. Marston and the extraordinary step he had taken is the universal topic, for Mr. Marston brings his bride home to-night, and, up to the present time, Hazelton is in darkest ignorance as to the antecedents of the lady.

“Mrs. Rippon is most unusually close on the subject,” Mrs. Blake, the vicarress, remarks, with asperity, to her friend the wife of the doctor. “No one can say that I am curious, no one can say that I attempt to pry into what doesn't concern me; but I must say that Mrs. Rippon's studied silence about her nephew's marriage has a very queer look.”

“Ah, she'll lose a good home, poor thing,” the doctor's wife responds, with a prolonged sigh that was designed to express pity; “but I've no doubt she's taken care of herself pretty well all these years she has kept house at The Brooks; she held the purse-strings, I hear——”

“And probably drove him into marrying by her extravagance about her daughter,” Mrs. Blake interrupts. “Ada is a very nice girl, and we're all very fond of her at the Vicarage; but I must say I've always thought there has been a great want of delicacy about Ada, in letting her mother lavish so many luxuries upon her with her cousin's money.”

“Perhaps Ada didn't know exactly how things were,” the other faintly interposes on behalf of the fallen young queen of The Brooks.

“Ah! I fear she did, I fear she did,” Mrs. Blake replies, pensively prodding a plump fowl, which she bruises in the process, and then declines to buy. “Ada, with all her faults, is not stupid; however, poor girl, she'll be punished for her sin of pride now; she'll find living in the High-street at Hazelton a very different thing to living at The Brooks.”

“There are worse places than the High-street,” the doctor's wife, who lives in that depreciated locality herself, says touchily; “and as for Ada's pride, I for one never found it in her. She's always ready to do my girls the good turn of sharing all her pleasures with them, and it isn't her fault, that she's a finer and more stately-looking young creature than any in the place.”

“Well, I'm sorry if what I said annoyed you,” Mrs. Blake says, with the pleased conviction that she has, by that timely reference to the quarter in which her friend lives, convinced the latter that she does not rank among the élite of the place; “I'm sorry if I've annoyed you; and was going to ask if you would drive me over to The Brooks to call on the bride on Monday, for, of course, if she's what she ought to be, she'll be at church on Sunday. People will naturally wait for me to lead the way in showing her attention.” And Mrs. Blake sails away, steeped in a haze of satisfaction with herself for having so successfully asserted her position before her friend and a few market-women.

Meanwhile Ada has done her part well, both at The Brooks, and at the new home her mother and herself have made in the High-street. At her cousin's special request,

and "as a slight atonement for the great grief they had caused him by going to a new home," he wrote, Mrs. and Miss Rippon agree to be at The Brooks, to receive, and dine with, the newly-married pair this night. Ada has done all the floral decorations of the rooms and dinner-table, as carefully and gracefully as if she were competing for a prize, or doing honour to a queen. The fairest, sweetest flowers, the most delicate ferns and waving grasses, adorn the boudoir of the coming bride. She has kept herself employed in preparations the whole day, and though her hands have trembled frequently, and her heart is bowed down with irrepressible pain, no one but herself has observed these signs of weakness! No one but herself knows, with what an agony of dread she looks forward to the moment, when she shall hear her cousin speak of the stranger who is coming, as his wife.

The carriage comes up the avenue at last, and the two ladies go out to the hall-door steps to greet their kinsman and his wife. "Put a good face on it, mamma," Ada whispers, encouragingly, as her mother shivers and turns pale; "think of what I should feel if I were going among strange people, and they didn't receive me warmly for my husband's sake." And the girl draws herself up, and looks bravely down into the carriage, and is seen thus—erect, gracious, full of kindly, womanly interest in the newcomer, more beautiful even than he had ever thought her before—for the first time by her cousin after his absence.

He springs out from the carriage and hands out a little, fluttering, brightly-dressed being, who begins at once to ask volubly concerning the whereabouts of "her dressing-case" and "her jewel-box." It is in vain that her husband directs her attention, very gently, to his aunt and cousin. The little lady has too recently come into possession of the glory represented by these two articles, and she must have them "taken into the house before she stirs."

"Your maid will see to these things," he whispers in an agony, as she simply turns away from shaking hands with the Rippsons, and resumes her fussy endeavours to secure her treasures. And then Ada looks at him pityingly, and sweeps down the steps, and takes one fluttering wing of the brightly-plumaged little bird, and says:

"We welcome you so warmly to your own home. Come! Bernard, I know, is impatient to hear what you think of it."

"Bernard 'as learnt that it's no use to try and 'urry me," the gracious young bride answers, disregarding her h's more than usual, in her endeavours to speak with the careless ease which she imagines befits her station. Then, the boxes coming to light, she allows herself to be conducted into the house, which she pants to admire aloud, only her mother has told her "on no account to show too much pleasure or surprise at anything, but make them understand you've been used to as good as they any day."

He sees his servants taking her measure accurately, and he knows that he has done her no good service by bringing her where she will never feel at ease, and where she will have only Ada and intuition to help her to do right, and compel the semblance of respect to be shown to her. Of one thing he is sure, whatever intuition may do, Ada will play her part nobly.

During dinner two or three little flaws in his wife's proceedings gall him and make him wince. While travelling the little actress had played her part at the different tables d'hôte creditably enough. The rush and hurry, the medley of manners, the glare, and the large law that is allowed to travellers, had all been in her favour, and she had passed muster very well indeed. But here, in the stately quiet of this well-ordered dining-room, with his solemn, silent-footed servants taking note of everything, with Ada trying not to see things, and at the same time striving to cover the very things she feigned not to see—with this for his present, and the even sharper ordeal of the neighbourhood's verdict in the future, it can hardly be wondered at that Mr. Marston did not enjoy his first dinner at home after his marriage.

"Have you nothing to say to me?" he asked, imploringly, of his cousin once in the evening. Mrs. Marston was employed at the time in helping her maid to unpack some of her well-filled trunks. The maid had been a fellow fighter on the battlefield of the stage with Harriet, and the latter, who was good-hearted as she was vain, saw a golden opportunity of benefiting her former friend by taking her into her own service, and at the same time securing a medium, whereby the glories of Mrs. Marston's present state could be accurately transmitted to the circle Miss Warren had formerly graced.

"They laugh at you finely in the servants'-hall," the confidante says eagerly,

as her mistress joins her in the dressing-room. "I'd have every one of them out of the house before the month's over, if I were you."

"Mr. Marston says I'm not to listen to any tales from the kitchen," the newly-fledged matron says, with an effort at dignity which her quondam friend laughs to scorn, as she replies:

"And they talk of Miss Rippon as if she was before everybody in the world nearly, and as if Mr. Marston ought to have married her——"

"He never thought of her," the poor little wife says with quickly-fired jealousy. "He cares for her as a sister, nothing else—he's told me so, and Mr. Marston is a gentleman, and wouldn't tell me a lie; and you're cruel to tease me so."

The remonstrance ends with a burst of tears, for the girl has a very tender heart, and she is beginning to realise that her position is an awfully lonely one. The friends of her youth, even the mother who bore her, are, she begins to see, unfit companions; not for her, but for Mr. Marston's wife, and for those who are suited to this honour she is no fit companion! Darkness settles upon her soul as she feels this in spite of the jewel-boxes and the other accompaniments of the "honour to which she was not born," which have been tendered to her, in homage to her position as "Mrs. Marston," not to her for herself.

In the meantime the colloquy between the two cousins has proceeded something after this wise. He says to Ada, "Have you nothing to say to me, Ada?" and she replies:

"This—that I hope you will be very happy, dear Bernard, and that you will bring your wife to lunch with us to-morrow after morning service. I want you to see our new house; I'm proud of it; I've arranged every bit of it myself."

"Won't you ask me why I've done—what I have done?" he questions.

"Indeed, I won't," she answers gaily; "whatever is best—I try to think that always; I've always believed the best of you, and I mean to do so still. You're rather a grave and reverend seigneur for such a bright, young, little thing as you've chosen; but you can make her happy if you try, and a gentleman is bound to do so much as 'try' to make the wife he has chosen happy."

He longs to tell her that it was not so much that he had chosen Harriet, as that

Harriet's mother had chosen him. But his heart fails him, at the task of attempting to prove to Ada that he has been contemptibly weak, and he dares not utter a word to her that might savour of disparagement to his wife. Not that he has even a reflection of a thought of disparagement against her in his own mind. The poor little girl has been innocent of all offence against him, and he feels pitifully that she will have to pay her full share of the bitter penalty, that must be paid for such unwise mating as theirs has been.

"Be her friend, if you can," he says dejectedly. And Ada's answer is:

"I'll be as faithful to her as I'll be to you." The girl checks herself, only to go and meet the bride who has been having the quarrel with her maid.

"Thank you, no, Miss Rippon; I don't want any tea; and when I do, I'll order it for myself; for I suppose I can have what I please in my own house," the poor little sore-hearted woman retorts, when Ada offers her a cup of tea.

Already the seeds of jealousy are springing, recently as they have been sown by an ill-advised friendly piece of tattle.

"You told me to wait, and know your relations first, before I asked mamma down here; but I shall do no such thing, I can tell you," the new wife says with hysterical indignation to her lord, after the Rippsons have driven away. "I've seen quite enough of them; a grim old woman, like your aunt, would soon give me the blues; and, as for Miss Ada, it's not what I call lady's manners to be putting herself so forward in another person's house."

"Ada is a dear sister to me, and this has been her home since she was a little child," he urges; but Mrs. Marston goes on carping and grumbling, and plays the part of justly-annoyed and outraged young highly-placed matron—which she desires to assume—almost as ungracefully as she had played the leading parts in genteel comedy, which had fallen to her share in the old days. She "wants none of their lunch, and none of their pushing themselves in where they're not wanted; and as for not having mamma down—dear, dear mamma shall come at once; dear mamma has always paid her way, and been beholden to nobody; and hasn't lived on a rich nephew's bounty all her life."

In due time—or, rather, with undue haste—dear mamma does come down, and the cup of Bernard Marston's misery is full. She has heard a word or two from Harriet

that puts her in possession of the whole state of the case; and, to do her justice, she does come with one desire, and one only, reigning in her heart. She does long to make Harriet's path smooth and happy; she does pine to complete the work she thinks she has begun so well, and show Harriet how to properly fill the position her mother has won for her. She means thoroughly well, in fact, unprepossessing, vulgar woman though she is. But even her devoted child feels that matters are worse, since mamma's arrival, before mamma has been with them a week.

It is not her ebullitions of temper that Harriet dreads, so much as her ebullition of tender feeling, or hilarious confidentialness. It is in these latter moods that she beats the drum, and blows the trumpet, and calls upon all who will to listen to her stories of her battles in the past. The worst of it is she never tells the tale of them as they were fought, but introduces a vast amount of extraneous gilding and varnish; and so Hazelton judges her out of her own mouth, and condemns the daughter for the mother's offences.

The old servants leave, the old friends drop off, the old usage at The Brooks falls into decay. There is abundance, extravagance, recklessness, when Mrs. Warren is not there to take the household helm. When she is there her habits of management, her views as to how things should be done, are more intolerable to Mr. Marston than any amount of uncalled-for lavish expenditure. He feels himself subsiding into a prematurely old man. He finds himself beginning to care for the mere creature comforts of warmth and wine, of undisturbed solitude, lightened by plenty of books and papers, and for little else—save Ada!

Yes, always for Ada, who for some unexplained reason rarely sees him now, but of whom he hears constantly, for she is always about his wife's path, and leaving the impress of her work about the place in a way that he sees and feels, but does not dare to mention for fear of rousing his wife's never long quiet jealousy. Nor does he dare to visit the house in the High-street very often, for Mrs. Marston gets hold of his goings in some mysterious way, and Mrs. Marston and her mother are not too delicate in the manner in which they censure the conduct of "young ladies who are going on for old maids, who try to draw men, no matter whether the men are married or not, about them."

At last a little son is born, and as Mr. Marston looks at the child, rejoices over it, and blesses the woman who has borne it to him, he forgets his folly, or rather is almost glad that he committed it. And Ada sits by the proud young mother's bed for hours every day, and unconsciously teaches Mrs. Marston to have high hopes for her boy that shall coincide with her husband's. And Harriet forgets all her little petty jealousies, and listens eagerly to stories of the Marston ancestry, and the unsullied name and reputation to which her son is born. She fights and strives, and prays to be fitted for this new position, for this crowning honour, this majesty of motherhood which has been accorded to her. She casts away all her tricks of mock pathos, of mock dignity, of mock feeling, and she lets all that is best and most womanly in her come to the fore without fear now, for is she not the mother of a son?

For a few months The Brooks is a bright and happy home, even though a temporary cloud is cast over it by Mrs. Rippon's grief at Ada's "obstinate refusal to make a most excellent match." Then the little son who has wrought the spell which has restored his father's interest in life, dies, and the mother wearies herself into the grave after him.

It is everybody's belief that the widower will marry again. But the worst part of Marston's folly is this—that the memory of it is an obstacle between the one woman he wants to marry, and himself. Ada is not particularly happy in the house in the High-street, but, like many another woman, she is sensible enough to try and make the best of it, she is ready rather to bear the ills she wots of than to go and brave the unforeseen! That unfortunate little girl who was thrust by her mother and fate into a groove she could never run in well, has been "a bad predecessor for a woman like me, who could never be content unless she reigned supreme in her husband's home and heart," Ada tells herself. But though she tells herself this, she listens very patiently to Bernard when he comes to her and talks to her in dispirited sentences about his loneliness, and his disappointment about the son of whom he had hoped to have made a friend and companion.

"And she would have gathered wisdom, and with it the power of making me happy if her boy had lived, poor thing," he says to Ada, remorsefully, sometimes; "but that chance is over, and there is nothing

left for me but a desolate widowhood, a lonely ending to a life that has been spoilt and blurred by a mistake, is there, Ada—tell me?" he winds up with, eagerly.

He asks her this question when the grass has been green over the grave of his wife and child for a year or two, and Ada cannot accuse either him or herself with disloyalty to that poor little failure, who is at peace now, as she holds her hand out to him and answers:

"There is a chance."

LEARNING TO COOK WITH THE POOR.

IN FIVE PARTS. PART II. A LESSON FROM A BOY.

SOME delay occurred, in the digging down to that particular substratum of food that had caught Parisina's imagination. Notification reached her that a boy of fourteen, the bookbinder's grandson, and motherless, did the whole of the cooking for his father, himself, and three other motherless children. So Parisina decided that there must be a visit to this boy, and the visit took place.

"Now"—and no name could have suited the young workman so well as "Willie;" for he did will; though, if he could have been called "Good-will," it would even have expressed his character still better—"tell me; does it matter to you in the slightest what you have to-day for dinner?"

"No!" And amusement and a half-awakened comprehension were visible, both in the boy's bright face and manner.

"Is your father here? Had you better ask him?"

"Father's gone out to work for the day. He won't be home till between eight and nine to-night; and he always leaves me to manage everything. I can do just what I like; or what's convenient."

"Then the best thing will be a meat-pudding. Just say what you want for it."

"Well"—and Willie was slow, for his considering-cap was on, and he had to be careful—"a pound and a half of blade-bone of beef, please; a pound of flour; a quarter of a pound of mutton-suet. A little bit of mutton, as well, gives it a better flavour, if you don't mind; just half a pound of the breast-bone; and then there'll be three pounds of the five-farthing potatoes; and that's all."

As nobody did mind the extra half pound of mutton to give a flavour, all the ingredients named were obtained (at a

total cost of two shillings and twopence-halfpenny), and placed at Willie's disposal. Willie, however, was nurse, as well as cook, in his modest establishment; and before he could turn to the table and attend to his cookery, there was a small Nellie of six years of age, there was a smaller Walter of four, to equip for their morning run about the streets. When jackets were buttoned, too, and hats tied—finishing with a last touch of a wisp of necktie under each little upturned chin—Willie had to administer a bribe.

"There, keep out," he said. "Go and play, for ever such a long time, and I'll give you a farthing each to buy a puff-puff!"

The bait was taken. The little faces lightened, the little fingers clutched the coin (which turned out to be a penny, though, to be honourably divided), and the little folks were gone.

"There now!" said their young director, after he had watched them toddle, hand-in-hand, through his newspaper shop—he being tradesman, as well as cook and nurse and general housekeeper and superintendent; his locale, a poor street in a North-London suburb—"my first thing is to get my kitchen-table in, and to clear up here a bit, to make room for it."

To make room was a desideratum, undoubtedly. Willie's back parlour was eight feet by ten, possibly; with a fireplace stuck trianglewise in one corner, cutting off a great portion of it; with the bed, in which both he and his father slept—three feet wide at the widest!—spread out opposite, a perpetual accessory; with almost every other inch of the area occupied by a large round table, covered with a fixed brown-leather cloth. But the new piece of culinary furniture was managed capitally. It had a great deal of sound but very little size, Willie having some fun in him; and as it was only a short plank, about as big as a good knife-board, it was easily laid on the near end of the brown-leather table, after some cups and plates had been shifted up together preparatorily; and there was Willie, ready to begin.

"We scour this kitchen-table once a week, regular," he said; "oftener, if it wants just more than a wash; for I shouldn't like it dirty, as long as soap and water can keep it clean. And, now—let me see! I shall want my dish to put my meat in as I cut it up, and my knife to cut it."

Willie's sole cupboard being a shelf stretched, high up, the whole length of his and his father's bed, his requisites were very handy, and he had quickly reached them.

"Ah!" he said, looking at the meat critically. "They haven't served you well over your beef. I've seen better. And they've charged a penny a pound more than they'd have charged us. That's it, you see: me not being able to go myself. But when father's out I daren't leave the shop, or this little parlour; no, not a minute. There, look, now!"

It was proof positive that leaving was impossible. A young man was crossing the door of it; and Willie had to fling down his knife and the debated purchase, to pass through—a shopman—and see what was required.

"Well!" when he came back, "done much business?"

"Two half-pennies for a penny."

"No? And did you give them?"

"Yes." Without a shadow of annoyance; simply as if it were ordinary life-routine (as, no doubt, it was), and as if it were out of all question to make remonstrance. "Now, then," he said, with a resumption of his cookery, almost at the same moment, "cut all the meat up you see in middling-sized pieces, like that. Keep cutting, right through, so; and lay the bits aside. I'll take off this bit of skin, I will; it's of no use; won't turn to gravy, nor nothing. Ah! knife wants sharpening! Come along."

The invitation was only to the knife; and the journey it was invited to take was only the short step between the table and the fender. Then Willie stooped, and made a raid among the fire-irons, as if they were a stack of weapons, and he was searching for the one he knew to be of the truest temper.

"This is the steel!" he cried, upright again. And he was whetting his knife up and down the poker magically, full of glee at the contrivance, and with his bright face all the brighter for it. "That's the favourite knife," he said, when he was fronting the table once more. "That was mother's." It was lying among some other things that had evidently done duty for breakfast. "It cut bread for twenty-three years, it did. This one," as he jerked his hand up, to show the one he was using better, "has done a deal of cutting in its time too."

It had soon done the meat-cutting under

his deft touch, at any rate; and after the pieces had been picked up off the "kitchen-table" and laid by in the dish, it had to be taken up again to chop up the mutton-suet.

The young cook swept what he had chopped into the basin into which he was going to put his flour, and he jumped up again to his shelf briskly.

"I'm thinking the pound of flour will be hardly enough," ran his cogitation, with the reflectiveness of a full-grown professor. "There's a good bit of meat, now I've come to cut it up—quite a good bit; and it ought to be thoroughly covered. Yes; I'll use some of our own flour as well, and then I shall be certain."

"Isn't it a pity to go to your own store?" was submitted, as a high glass canister was brought down—of the sort seen holding "bulls' eyes" in shop windows. "Mightn't there be another visit to the baker's, to buy a little more?"

"No, thank you," was the culinary decision. "I've plenty here; see"—and, indeed, the matty canister was well filled up—"for I've always got to keep a stock, you know, to make paste of, to paste my placards on to my boards. Besides, I shall only want a little, after all."

The next operation was to pour the flour into the basin over the suet; and the next, to rush through the glass door again, on the advent of a customer. It was a tall clerical gentleman, correct, impressive, with much sombreness and dignity.

"Sell him anything?" For in a minute Willie had once more opened and shut the glass door, and was returned.

"No. Hadn't got it."

"What did he want, then?"

"The Rock."

"You see," was the remark of the young cook, stopping a moment to tell a secret of his commerce, "we don't keep such papers unless they're ordered. We should only have them left. And look at the penny papers, even! We have to sell two hundred and forty to get a pound; and, if we have one left over, we lose the profit of three!"

Mercantile and arithmetical Willie! Mastering the matters it was good for him to master, whether they appertained to shop-keeping or they appertained to cookery. And here he was, occupied with his pudding again, instantly.

He mixed his flour and suet thoroughly; he poured water into the mixture; he stirred it round and round with his knife,

till he had brought it to the proper adhesiveness and stiffness; he laid a pastry-board on the top of his "kitchen-table"—it was perfectly clean, as were all his other things; he emptied his lump of paste upon it; he reached his pastry-roller; he was perfect in his manner of rolling it out. After a turn or two, too, he drew his knife through the easy bulk of his paste-lump, cutting it in half; and he put one half of it aside.

"This is for the bottom of my basin," he said, after he had rolled out, thin, the piece he was still handling. "I used to see mother doing it, and it's by watching her I learnt."

"Mother" was copied with all skilfulness; with so much, it would have been impossible to have said such a trick was missing, or to have pointed to a wrong trick, and have suggested another in its place. The circular piece of paste was transferred to the intended basin; it was laid down into it, deep; its edges were allowed to fall over the basin-rim, in quite the orthodox way. Then the meat-pieces were taken out of the dish into which they had been put; were laid in good style in the cavity prepared to receive them; were saluted with a light sprinkle of salt and pepper; were kept from unartistic abutment by the prompt and perfectly skilful upturning of the falling paste-edges into the form of a dyke or wall. The other half of the paste was taken in hand immediately after this. It was laid upon the board; it was floured a bit, and rolled a bit; it was hoisted at last on to the paste-bound meat-head, and was pressed down upon it cunningly.

"Now for my cloth," said Willie, reaching one and spreading it out; "and now my string."

But he had to go into his shop, among his business appliances, for this last. And it must not be supposed that he had been separated from his shop during his last minutes of pudding-preparation and pudding-fulfilment. He had been perpetually called off into it. There had been a Telegraph wanted, a "Nooze," a Musical Budget, a Boys' Own, a penny Gates Ajar, a Warbler, some envelopes—a lively trade, making him abandon his cookery at every possible stage. He had had, too, to attend to his little Nellie and his little Walter. A bitter north wind kept driving the poor little mites to the shelter of indoors; the restlessness of childhood kept driving the poor little

mites out. Then the wind kept blowing—to one leaf of the shop-door, with a little person obliged to be coaxed out to go and open it; and the same wind, blowing again, would blow down one of the pasted placard-boards, rendering it necessary that a little person should be coaxed out to go and pick it up. Altogether, Willie, in his cookery, was hampered, and hindered, and hung about with, a host of the burdens that most working-people, in their cookery, are hampered and hindered and hung about with; and, at last, he was brought to a full stop by something that could not be overcome by patience, temper, and submission. He had tied up his pudding, he had given the proper deft knot to the ends of the pudding-cloth, he had turned to his fireplace to drop his pudding down into his saucepan, and then his parlour-stove, a triangular, obstinate, inefficient old thing, wouldn't draw—wouldn't be roused into heat and glow—would only show a black face to everything, and wreathe itself round with puny, sullen smoke!

"That's always the way with that old stove!" cried Willie. "And then, just as father and me's going to bed, it takes it into its head to burn up cheerfully, and it seems a shame to put it out!"

And yet Willie had made every preparation. From the beginning, he had had on his large tin pudding saucepan (holding a gallon and a half; his pudding being of gigantic proportions, it must be owned), he had had a smaller pan upon the inconvenient slope-walled hob, to be ready for his potatoes, when he had them peeled; he had even put a little kettle handy in the fender, to be urged into hotness from its top, or sideways, or somehow, from which he was to supply the pudding saucepan as the water in it, from the boiling, gradually steamed away. It was bricks that beat him, oblique chimney-coursing, defective construction; but he broke out into his proper vein agreeably.

"You come off," he said to the pudding-pan, moving it down into the fender. "You may stay," he said to the other, letting it remain upon the hob. "And now," to the general company, as he made a brisk attack on as much as there was of the fire, and put something on it, "here's a comical thing! Six a penny! With a little patience, one of them would light a fire without any wood at all! Fire-blazers they call them; or, perhaps, that's what I call them, and I don't know their right name!"

The article applied (whatever it may have been) did not act as a fire-blazer, except for giving a fizz and a wink for a shadowy moment, and then dying dead out again; so possibly Willie had really that much error in him, and was wrong in his designation. At any rate, he had to send his eldest girl, Eliza (aged ten, perhaps, and home then from some newspaper delivering), to a little out-house for some sticks, and he had to put these in, and on his recalcitrant fire; and then he hoisted his big tin saucepan up again, amidst the crackle and the flame, and went on with the next item in his arrangements.

It was peeling the potatoes. The girl Eliza—heard, subsequently, softened by younger lips into Wiser—brought a clean crockery pan of cold water. Willie dropped the potatoes into it, and there he let them stay, to bide their time. He was content with one water to wash them in, earning, that way, a blotch on his fair escutcheon. But his tiny back-parlour was not furnished with a sink, down which he could pour panful after panful of dirty water as he thought well; his sister Wiser staggered under the weight of the one pan as it was, requiring the inconvenient door to be held open for her, lest the water should pour down upon the floor; he could not be going backwards and forwards himself, because of shop-duty.

He was called off by a customer before he could do any more, Wiser being also temporarily absent; and in the blank of the interim, or as an interlude, a question was put à propos to the little six-years Nellie. She had been driven into the parlour again, poor little one, as it happened, by lack of enthralling out-door amusement, and she was looking up with rapt and pretty eyes.

"And can you cook, dearie? From seeing brother?"

It took Nellie aback. But in a minute after, it was to be understood, from Nellie's manner, that Nellie thought she could.

"Well; and you see brother has been getting ready the potatoes. What will he do with them next; do you know?"

"Put 'em in a tortpan!" which Nellie brought out quickly; inspired by being sure, she was so very sure.

"Yes. And," after a little more, "how long do you think brother will let the potatoes and the tortpan be?"

"A torter of an hour!" with the utmost precision and gravity; with quite a splash of pomp.

From which it was quite certain (ran

Parisina's whisper) that little children do want cookery lessons, supposing, that is, they are only near enough to the cradle when the children can be caught, and the lessons can be given.

Willie returned at the moment. Willie was delighted to find his fire looking briskly up, with the several waters he had on it and by it, uttering promissory sounds; and after a few minutes' more watching and tending, Willie was still more delighted to find his pudding-pan ready for his pudding, and to be able to pop his pudding in.

"I haven't made one of this sort this six months," went his cheery comment. "You see I can't make puddings regular, being obliged to be in and out, in and out, always to the shop. I'm forced only to cook such things as I can cook quick; and then to keep everything I want just on this shelf here, where I can get it quick, as well. It makes one feel unsettled like, that's the worst of it," came then, with something like a sigh. "I don't sometimes feel settled enough somehow even to read."

Was it not a faithful sketch of the troubles of the poor, of the many disadvantages they labour under? And, in truth, Willie's settlements, or leisure moments, had the smallest possible space. The facts were that, though the first part of his cookery was over, with his choppings and peelings done, and he was really able to be seated by the fire, it was only for him to watch the pot, to keep tipping the little kettle back upon some obtrusive piece of coal, to cut a "cat" out of a piece of firewood for little Walter, to persuade the child to go out and play with it, to have the child come back one minute after, lamenting that the first "tip" of his new plaything had sent it flying right down the next-door rails. There was only time for talk, indeed; and that in fragments; but as there were many things on which Willie could throw good light, talk was suggested, and talk took place.

"Well, we buy a piece, of about three pounds, of eightpenny bacon on a Saturday," went Willie's part of it. "That's our week's stock, and is kept up there on the shelf, handy. We have this for breakfasts, and the same every morning, with bread and dripping and coffee; because I get up about half-past six always, I light the fire, I open the shop, I go out with the morning newspapers—as father's at home then, and can do the rest; and by the time I come in, a little after eight o'clock, I'm real hungry."

It gave the figures for one of Parisina's rapid calculations. Three pounds of bacon a week, for six people, would cost fourpence each on the average, or a little over a halfpenny a morning. Hum; well; it might be allowed. But, in spite of this magnanimous surrender, a question was brought out, closely, respecting butter.

Willie echoed the word with a little contempt in him. "No! We don't like butter well enough to eat much of it," he said. "We buy dripping. That's sevenpence and eightpence a pound, whilst butter's thirteen and fourteen; and when we're eating dripping, we know what we're eating; and we have it for tea, too; seldom anything more."

Which gave more excuse for the half-a-pound a piece a week of bacon than even had been thought; and with this comfortably settled, the talk went on.

"Sunday's dinner?" said Willie. "Ah, our Sunday's dinner don't give me much trouble. We send it out to be baked. We can't roast here well; we've got no oven—which is why we can't never have baked rice puddings, fruit tarts, and such, unless we send them out; and yet we do like a joint on Sundays, when we haven't been having much, perhaps, all the week. So we get on Saturday nights a piece of beef, or a piece of mutton, about five pounds weight, costing about three shillings and sixpence; and we have five pounds of potatoes underneath it; and then, as we shouldn't have any saucepans on the fire, because the meat and potatoes were gone to the bakehouse, I should get twopenny-worth of greens of some sort, and I should cook those at home. Can't have them any other day, you see; there's no room. It's hard work managing, even, as it is."

It was; and Willie had to be his own interruption here, for he saw it was time to put on his potatoes, and he had to get up to do it.

"Well," he said, as he set the saucepan in its right place again, "there's my Monday's dinner now for me to tell you. We should have the cold meat that was left from Sunday; and I should take all the potatoes and greens that were left, and fry them. Tuesday I might have a little bit of boiled mutton, with some more potatoes, and I might make a few ball dumplings to eat with them. Then Wednesday I should only get half a sheep's liver to fry—fivepence. Our dinner would be of bread pudding, made out of all the pieces saved together from the week. I

should soak the bread from over night; squeeze it dry; chop up six ounces of suet with it, and put in a pound of currants at fourpence, and a biggish handful of sugar, because sugar's cheap now, and the children like it. Then, Thursday, we might have a bit of astew, put properly on with vegetables, and some boiled potatoes. Friday, I should get a pound of steak, perhaps; come to a shilling, and be dear, because there'd be none left for father when he came home from work at night, and on most of the other days there would. I should make a plain suet pudding of a Friday, too, I dare say, with just a pound of flour and a quarter of a pound of suet, as I've done just now. And then of Saturdays—oh, of Saturdays we can't bother for dinner! We're too busy. We have bread and cheese; and then, perhaps, for tea we cut off a slice of the joint we're going to have for the next day, Sunday, and we cook that."

"When it is already to last for the Monday's dinner cold, as well as the Sunday's dinner hot, and it only weighed five pounds at the beginning!"

"Yes," said Willie, in his submissive content, "we make it do, somehow. Besides, when all the work's over, for Saturday's work's heavy, we have a good cocoa supper."

"And is there much else that you have, besides what you say?"

"No; because there isn't much else, you see, that we can have. And of course what we can't do ourselves, we have to do without!"

Ay, there was the point. Minus this faculty of doing without, where would the poor be? Our programme was just to wait the rest of the time the pudding and potatoes would take to get done; and we waited accordingly.

"Kettle has to do his duty," cried Willie, in the midst of it; it was as he was raising the pudding-pan lid, to replace such of the water bubbling round his pudding as had steamed away. "Must have hot water, you see, for all sorts of things; so kettle's on all day—it's never off."

Yes; and Willie most excellently matched his "kettle." There was no doubt about it. Our last view of him was with his cloth laid, his plates spread, his three children round about him at the table; with the top round of his pudding cut neatly off, showing the steamy, savoury meat inside, and his three children waiting anxiously for their help. His potatoes had to be served out of the saucepan, poor

young housekeeper; a vegetable dish being another of the things he was obliged to "do without;" but the food would be none the less nourishing for the inelegance; and it was just another item noticed, to add to the long list being laid up in Parisina's heart, as we walked away.

WHAT HE COST HER.

BY JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGER," "AT HER MERCY,"
"HALVES," &c.

CHAPTER XXIII. PROCRASTINATION.

THERE is this peculiarity in the misfortunes of mankind, which also renders them more bitter—namely, that they generally come from quarters wholly unexpected. We may look for a fire to break out in our new conservatory, heated by the very last new apparatus, and naturally, therefore, arousing apprehensions, the case being only mitigated by the knowledge that we are insured; but what does happen is a hail-storm that smashes the place to shivers, and for the damage arising from which catastrophe we receive no compensation. And thus it was with Ella Landon in her present state of anxiety and alarm. Her speculations for the "fall" took every direction, save that her husband would refuse to remove his residence to the West of England. Even in that case she would have had cause enough for fear for her secret, but she did think that, so far, she was safe. He had complained of the gloom of the City and of the confinement of his London life, so far as it was associated with his business and his home; had often, too, expressed his partiality for the country, and, though it was true that was on account of the opportunities it offered for sporting, and the shooting season was at this period almost over, yet the immediate change was understood to be only temporary; in future he might divide his time as he pleased, and, in fact, possess two houses, one in town and one in the country. Under these circumstances, with the additional advantages of having an increased income, and of giving pleasure to his father, Ella had never contemplated that Cecil would oppose himself to the new arrangement. And yet he did so point-blank. He would run down for a day or two to the West of England, and put matters in hand there, he said, but make it a place of residence he would not.

The old gentleman was very angry at his obstinacy, as Ella gathered from Cecil's manner, who had evidently been made

angry also. She did not see him till the following morning—if between two and three A.M. can be called so—when he came home from dining with Mr. Magenta at the club. That is what he would have had his wife believe, at least; and it was not a time for her to express disbelief. She had her own thoughts, and they were not pleasant ones, about that matter; but other things were just then more important and more pressing. The incident, however, caused her to regard the idea of a residence in the country, where folks do not keep such very late hours, and there are no clubs, with even greater favour than before. She was resolved to make a fight for it, though, if possible, not to let him see she was fighting; and, above all, she must not lose her temper, or cause him to lose his. If the discovery she feared must needs take place, she was resolved that it should happen under the most favourable conditions for her forgiveness, and when her husband and herself were on the best of terms.

But to fence with an adversary whom one is not to prick with the foil, is to contend at a disadvantage indeed; and other things were against her also. In the first place, thinking he would not be so very late, and wishing to discuss the question of change of residence with him, she had sat up for Cecil, and he resented that as a reproach, as husbands will, especially when they feel that they deserve reproach.

"How foolish it is of you, Ella, to fatigue yourself in this way; I told you I might not be home to dinner; and when a man is dining with one, one can't turn him out of the club till he chooses to go."

Under ordinary circumstances Ella would perhaps have answered, "Can't one?" a little mournfully, for she was well aware that no human creature could have persuaded Cecil to stay anywhere, when he had a mind to come away. He would have excused himself in the most pleasant way in the world, on the score of the necessity of rising early the next morning, or would even have laughingly laid the burthen upon Ella herself: "I am so hen-pecked, you know, that I daren't stay;" but he would certainly have come away.

"I am not tired, darling, and I don't blame you," replied she, sweetly. "Of course, I was anxious to know what decision you had come to with regard to your father's proposition as to Wellborough. I assured him that, so far as I was concerned—"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Cecil,

curtly; "he told me you didn't care which way it was."

"But, indeed, I didn't say that, darling; I said I should like to live at Wellborough very much."

"I confess I can't sympathise with your taste then. It's the dullest, dreariest town in England. I would as soon be buried alive as live there."

"Oh, Cecil, I thought you were so fond of the country? I know, when we were at the Lakes——"

"Oh, that was very different," interrupted Cecil, with a laugh that was not intended to be a mocking one, but which to her ears sounded so. "Every place was delightful then; but one isn't always on one's honeymoon."

"That is true," sighed Ella. "Still, there would be hunting and shooting, I suppose, at Wellborough?"

"Not a bit of it. There would be nothing to do—but dye."

"There would certainly be fishing, because the town stands on a river."

"In which our works, it is complained, have poisoned all the fish; but, at all events, I hate fishing."

"But your father seemed to have set his heart upon it so, dear."

"My dear Ella, I think I have done enough, and to spare, to please my father already."

"Oh, Cecil," said she with tender reproach.

"Nay, I don't mean in marrying you, my dear. I did that, of course, to please myself; but in leaving the army. In doing that I did a good deal in the way of filial obedience, as both he and you are well aware. It is impossible to shape one's life entirely in accordance with the wish of another—especially if one has no wishes in common with him. I don't deny that the governor is very good to me."

"And very fond of you, Cecil."

"I believe that; but that feeling is not so contrary to nature as to be set down so very largely to his credit. There's a good deal of nonsense talked about the obligations one is under to the 'author of our being,' as the moralists call one's papa; but the probability is, he didn't become so upon our account. I know you have an exaggerated notion of filial duty, and I have no doubt you were the best of daughters, but——"

"I was not that, Cecil, heaven knows," interrupted Ella, gravely.

"Well, one would really think so from the way you preach to me sometimes. For

my part, I think the governor is very unreasonable; and, I must say, I didn't like the way he threw you at my head, as it were, this morning, saying how little you cared for society, and how you loved quiet, and that it was all my fault that we couldn't live at Wellborough."

"I am very sorry, dear; your father must have misunderstood me. I don't remember saying anything of the kind."

"Well, he said that you didn't care for the Groves' picnic, for example, which I have heard you say, myself, you were looking forward to with the greatest pleasure. It would almost seem that you had two faces, Ella—one for him and one for me."

"I told your father that I didn't care for the picnic, so far as the Groves and the other people were concerned; but I do care for it since you are to be there, Cecil. That was what I meant."

"Then the governor got hold of the wrong end of the stick, that's all. It's not worth arguing about—especially as the matter's settled—and I am sorry to say it's very late," and with that Cecil walked into his dressing-room, and closed the door with rather a sharp click.

There were moments during that interview when poor Ella had been sorely attempted to show her annoyance, but she had restrained herself. She had now the mortification of reflecting that, whatever she had gained by her forbearance, she had certainly not gained her point.

The subject of a change of residence was not again adverted to between Ella and her husband, but it was necessary to talk of Wellborough. Cecil was going down thither, it was not quite settled for how long, and it was only natural, she thought, that she should accompany him. She had been with him before upon his business trips, though not always; but those on which she had not accompanied him had been much briefer than this one was likely to be. At first she even took it for granted that she was to go, nor did he absolutely forbid it. But it was clear that he had no intention, or at all events no wish, to take her.

"Things will be very uncomfortable," he said, "down at Wellborough. The man who is giving us all this trouble is still there, though he has accepted another situation; we cannot therefore occupy our own house, but should have to go to an hotel. And I should think an hotel at Wellborough would be hateful."

"I do not mind discomfort, so long as

I am with you, Cecil," she had said, and meant it with all her heart. But he had still denied her, basing his objections upon the same ground.

"You can't imagine what it would be," he said; "moreover, it will be an excellent opportunity while I am away to ask poor Gracie to come and stay with you."

It was the second time that he had hinted—or seemed to do so—that Gracie's company could make up to her for his absence, and it had a still more painful effect, like a blow on an old wound. But this time she did not reproach him. She had resolved not to do so whatever he said; and this time there was no need to oppose the proposition, since she would be glad enough to receive Gracie, while he was away, that she might make her at least safe with respect to her secret. But the wound rankled for all that. Moreover, the impression remained with her, that notwithstanding all her patience, and efforts at conciliation, and even her loving attempts to win him, that she had not brought herself nearer to her husband. Was his love for her then really weakened, while her love for him remained as strong as ever, nay, stronger—or rather more feverishly strong, at the bare idea, that she might come to lose his love. It was not, perhaps, really weakened. There are subtle influences which make themselves felt under such circumstances, however we strive to veil their presence. The possession of her secret, and the fact that she was endeavouring to ingratiate herself with him for a purpose, no doubt affected her pleadings unknown to herself. He never, indeed, suspected that she had any such design, but there was something in her manner that failed to please, or at all events to attain her object. During the honeymoon (as he had said) she might have succeeded.

Having satisfactorily disposed of this "unpleasantness," and got his way, one would have imagined that Cecil would have been in high good-humour. But this was far from being the case. It was not, indeed, in his nature to be downright sulky; but he took it in dudgeon that after that supreme sacrifice to filial duty, as he considered it, in the matter of adopting the mercantile profession, his father should have endeavoured to exile him to Wellborough. The delights of

town were dear to him, the pleasures of the west-end of it formed his solace for his drudgery in the east, and it seemed most unreasonable that he should be expected to give them up. He felt it hard that, just when London was at its gayest, he should have to go to Wellborough even for a few days, which might indeed be weeks. One of his reasons for not taking his wife with him, which would rather have comforted her had she known it, was, that he thought she would somewhat cripple his movements as respected coming back again. The first hour after he could get his business done, he had made up his mind would be the last he would spend at Wellborough.

As the time of his departure drew nigh—it was to be the day after the picnic at Virginia Water—Ella evinced her love for him in a thousand ways, as a good wife will do on the eve of ever so short an absence of her consort. But though he acknowledged them by his manner—for he was neither bear enough, as many men are, to take them as matters of course, nor brute enough, as a few are, to despise them—he did not, to her mind at least, reciprocate her tenderness. She was persuaded, therefore, or persuaded herself, that the moment had not arrived even yet, for throwing herself upon his breast, and confessing to the deception that she had practised on him. He was going away whither such tidings would not meet him, and in the meanwhile, perhaps, some plan might be arranged with Gracie, who had promised to stay with her in his absence, for breaking it to him in a judicious manner. So once more was the evil day put off.

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